

Story 2018 (1996 Tape 5)

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Jesus and the Business of the Devil

The Devil was not made of earth, as human beings were, but of fire.¹ Because of that, he had some features different from those of men. One of these special qualities was his ability to change his looks in order to appear to be whoever he wished or whatever he wished.

One day Blessed Jesus saw the Devil disguised as a seller of donkeys. Jesus said to him, "Oh, Devil, where are you going disguised as a donkey merchant?"

When the Devil realized that Jesus had recognized him, he felt that there was no longer any need to hide his main purpose. He therefore answered, "I am going to the marketplace."

"What will you do there?"

"I shall sell these donkeys along with their loads.

Jesus asked, "Aren't donkeys usually sold separately, without any loads on their backs?"

¹In Muslim mythology angels are sometimes thought to have been created of fire and/or air and/or snow. Some Muslims, as well as some Christians, believe that the Devil (Satan) was a fallen angel.

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"That may be true of some donkeys, but not of mine. However precious any donkey of mine may be, its load is also precious. In fact, the donkey and its load are each more valuable than the other.² Someone who considers buying a donkey may become more interested in doing so when he learns about its load. He may then buy it even more eagerly."

Jesus grew more curious and he wondered now, "O Allah, Allah, what is he going to sell? What is so valuable about the loads carried by these donkeys?" He then asked the Devil, "What is special about the donkeys' loads? What is it that you are going to sell? Tell me about this

Pointing to his first donkey, the Devil said "This animal is loaded with jealousy. I may sell it to some unintelligent person who is trying to become a scientist, and in order to indulge that feeling, he may well buy this load of jealousy."

After that the Devil showed Jesus the second donkey. He said, "This beast is loaded with pride."

²This paradoxical comparison is not uncommon in Turkish tales. Elsewhere in ATON are statements like this: "There were twelve beautiful girls, each more beautiful than all of the rest."

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"To whom will you sell it?"

"I may sell it to some rich person. Rich people have plenty of money but little intelligence. They like to scorn people who are poorer than they are. This load of pride will enable one of them to increase his scorn considerably."

"And what does the third donkey bear on his back?"

"The third donkey is loaded with injustice, and I shall offer it for sale to a government official. Many such officials will not take any action without first seeking a bribe. That is often why they delay doing anything. One of them will be attracted by my load of injustice."

After he had heard the Devil talk in this way, Jesus began to pray. He said, "My Allah, save those who might be tempted to be customers of this donkey merchant. Let no one guilty of jealousy, pride, or injury buy any of these donkeys."

Hearing this, the Devil said, "Hey! What are you doing? How can I sell donkeys if your prayer is answered?"